Time magazine 100 . A piece on Netanyahu. By Ehud Barak

Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu was just elected the new Israeli Prime Minister. The campaign brought a clash with President Obama, renouncing “two states solution” and talking of “Arab Herds” voting. But it ended in his triumph.

Netanyahu won because a majority of voters,watching what happens around us, believed (that the MidEast is nothing like the MidWest.) That Israel is a “A villa in the Jungle” as I once called it. (Their common sense told them) that “life itself”

as Bibi put it “ is more important than quality of life”.

I knew Bibi, decades ago, as a soldier and young officer under my command facing real fire. He was determined, effective and focused . Character does not change. Chicken shit he is not. Now he got more mature and experienced and while remaining thoughtful and avid reader of history he developed a mindset both pessimistic, passive and anxious.(“A pessimist in the MidEast is an optimist with experience” they say.I don’t think that’s always true.) Netanyahu seems to

avoid any initiative. Critics might say its all about surviving in power, populism or foreign influence. I think he is more complex and nuanced than this.

Netanyahu was elected to lead Israel. in Israel, I personally know, it’s not easy to be elected, not simple to govern and extremely challenging to leave a positive imprint on History. Netanyahu is basically right on Iran and basically right in describing a neighbourhood full of risks. He sometimes fails to act upon opportunities. And grossly ignores the slippery slope waiting Israel in the form of

“one state solution” as well as the fact that Israel is, and will remain in the foreseeable future the strongest country in the region.

In the wake of his re-election(, aware of those strengths and hopefully with a clear mind) Netanyahu has now to act swiftly to heal wounds from within ; Mend working relationship and trust, if possible, with President Obama; Fight hard, mainly behind closed doors for better policy, even action if needed , against Iran; And daringly initiate, coordinated with the U.S. and others, region-wide negotiations of

moderates to discuss the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, radical muslim terror and the hegemonic and nuclear intentions of Iran.

The challenges are huge but clear. We are at a moment of decision. Daring actions are needed. Not just words. Can he? Will he? - Time will tell.